**Nationalism and the Nation-State; the beginning of the world as we know it today**

Mr. Balazs, Western Civilization I

**William the Conqueror**- **Consolidation of England**

As discussed previously, France and England were quite connected for centuries. William the Conqueror came from Normandy (northwest of France) and defeated Harold at the Battle of Hastings in 1066. William’s claim to the throne was through his second cousin, Edward the Confessor, the previously ruler of England (all were descendants of the Vikings).

When William won he consolidated Power in England by tossing out the old Vassals/Nobles, and replacing them with his own team who had pledged an oath to him. As a result many of the new nobles had lands in what is now England as well as France and spent vast amounts of time in France. Moreover,t hey often intermarried with other French nobility. For example, the English King, Henry the Second, married a wealthy, noblewoman named Eleanor of Aquitaine (large province of France). Most of the time, marriages of nobles were arranged to increase power and develop closer relationships with other leaders.

Henry II was a strong King and as such, he could maintain the support and fear of the Vassals/Nobles. In contrast a weak King could have problems, including threats to his own rule. The King relied on the Vassals/Nobles for money, protection and armies. Not surprisingly, the Vassals/Nobles often resented paying money, protection and providing armies (knights). Therefore when there was a weak King and things went badly, the Vassals/Nobles either directly threatened the King or sought more power to take part in decision-making.

***Power is a zero sum game - In order for one or several people in a society to gain power another person or persons in a society have to lose power*.**

In the early 13th Century, King John, also known as *softsword*, was a weak King. As King he lost lands in France, cost the Vassals/Nobles money and troops and didn’t provide much in return. As a result the Nobles/Vassals demanded more power. To gain more power they had to take some power from the King. The **Magna Carta (**[**http://2.bp.blogspot.com/\_CczI3LO4CjM/TJ4j\_p8jx\_I/AAAAAAAABTI/tPirEHEkJ8Q/s1600/magna-carta%5B1%5D.jpg**](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_CczI3LO4CjM/TJ4j_p8jx_I/AAAAAAAABTI/tPirEHEkJ8Q/s1600/magna-carta%5B1%5D.jpg)) is an example of a zero sum game. The Vassals/Nobles gained while he Kings lost. The Magna Carta was a written agreement between the King and the Vassals/Nobles.

Before the Magna Carta, the King could decide on his own, issues such as taxation, arrest, property and issues dealing with a “fair trial”. The Nobles/Vassals demanded that they have a say in these matters as well as other issues affecting them. They also wanted it an agreement in writing. The King didn’t give up this power to be nice but because his failure to do so may have resulted in him being dethroned. The Magna Carta is often looked upon as a document that protected people's rights; in reality it only protected the Nobles/Vassals. A Vassal could still kill a serf who killed a deer on his property. However the Magna Carta established a degree of power sharing that did not previously exist in England and opened up the possibility of a limited Monarchy.

Later, another King, Edward I in 1295 created **Parliament**. Edward I though **wasn’t** **forced to do it**. Edward I established Parliament to limit the Vassals/Nobles power. Aware that he couldn’t simply backtrack on the Magna Carta, he decided to include even more people in government (*sounds like Caesar adding Senators*!), the Burghers. Edward I needed support in his wars with France, and by including the Burghers he bettered the chance that he would get the money and knights necessary to win the battles.

As the early Middle Ages were ending, Towns were gaining importance. The new Burgher class was developing. This group of people were quite different that the nobles and vassals and were often concerned about issues such as trade. In many ways Edward’s appeal to the Burghers was similar to when the President goes on television to try to get the American people to support him in a War. The President doesn’t have to get the American people to support him, by law he can send troops anywhere in the World without talking to the American people. Moreover, the Senate and House of Representatives declare War, so arguably he should simply focus on them. Yet the President still tries to get the People to support him. just as Edward sought more support for his endeavors in 1295.

Parliament literally means a place to talk. Edward I created a two body Parliament. These thereafter became called the House of Lords: Vassals and Nobles, and the House of Commons: Burghers (commoners, city people). (**Compare this system with the Roman Government).** Parliament was consulted when the King needed to raise taxes or make other major policy decisions.

**Meanwhile in France....**

The French Kings were weak. Unlike in England where one person (William) replaced all the other leaders with people who were loyal to him, in France, the Vassals/Nobles initially decided who would be king and regularly chose someone they could control. It was many years since Charlemagne ruled, and the subsequent rulers had little power.

The King in France had limited ability to tax or to raise an army. Many Vassals/Nobles were virtually as powerful as the King. As a result many people in France felt more loyalty to their Lord than the King. Moreover, people in one part of France spoke a different language than in another and had vastly different customs. They were clearly not a united country. On top of this, roads barely existed (the best roads by far where the old roman roads now almost a thousand years old!!!), Towns had started to develop, but without the protection of a Vassal/Lord, travelling from one area to another was extremely hazardous. Pirates would often steal and even kill a traveler. Additionally, the King could not effectively attack a Vassal or Lord since the Castles were virtually impenetrable.

**IN the 14th and 15th Century three major events occurred:**

In the early 14th Century, the French King died without a male heir. There had never been a Queen who ruled France and women’s rights were still 600 years away. A new King would have to be determined. But remember all those arranged marriages between French and English Royalty? (In our world it would be as if Al Gore’s son married George Bush’s daughter!!! Stranger things have happened even here!!! President Nixon’s daughter married President Eisenhower’s grandson; but it wasn’t arranged)

**First Big Event:** The French were in for some bad luck. The dead French King’s sister had married the previous English King and they had a son...who became King of England, he was arguably the closest relation to the now dead French King. For years the English and French had been battling about land in France. Remember both King John and King Edward II made changes to the English Government because of these battles. Many in France did not want to have an English King ruling them. But now the English King had a right to the French throne, and as a result England would be able to take over France without even a jousting match to decide. The French didn’t like this idea and selected someone else as King.

The King of England later decided this would be his chance to begin a War, gain the throne of France and get all those territories back that were lost over the years...plus some. A war started which would be known as the 100 Year War.

War back in the 14th Century was a little different than War today. In winter they didn’t fight nor when the fields needed to be tended. So battles generally only occurred a few months a year. As a result this war seemed to never start and never end... In total it lasted 116 years...(Yes the 100 year war was not 100 years but the War of 1812 was in 1812 (but ended in 1814)). Remember too, that the King of England had many people loyal to him in the land we know of as “France” because he was still in charge of vast sections of the area and the vassals remained obligated to him.

**Second Big Event:** Two new weapon systems arose in the 14th and 15th Century, the longbow and the Cannon. They spelled the end to the Knight and the Castle. The longbow went long distances and shot through a knight's armor, meanwhile, the Cannon made the walls of the Castle vulnerable.

A few knights from the Vassal/Noble were no longer enough to field a strong army, and the Vassal/Noble now needed protection from the King. As a result the Vassal/Noble provided even more people to the King and the people had to pay taxes to the King to provide him money for the new larger armies. The tax would hit the little people since the King didn’t tax the Vassals/Nobles since to do so may have upset them and cause him to lose support.

At the same time, Joan of Arc, helped develop a sense of nationalism on the part of the French people that eventually with the bigger armies, more money and cannon’s helped them drive the English from France.

By the end of the 15th Century France’s borders were largely the same as today and the King was now far more powerful

**Third Big Event:** Decline in the Church. If all the problems with arranged marriages weren’t enough, on top of it were the constant squabbles between the Church and the King. In the late 13th Century the King of France kidnapped the Pope. Yes kidnapped the Pope, after an argument about who had ultimate authority (kind of like king of the hill). The Pope got away, but the French King wanted to make sure that the next Pope would be loyal to him, so he got the French cardinals to as a group outvote the other cardinals and elect a French Pope. The new French Pope didn’t feel very comfortable in Italy, he remembered what the French king did to the Italian Pope (who died shortly after being kidnapped) and was worried that the Italians may do something similar to him.

So the French King and Pope moved the Papacy to a church owned area in France called Avignon. Now remember that thing called a tithe? Well all those English people were paying a tithe to a Church in France during a war (imagine if American’s had to pay a tax to a leader in Iraq during that War!!!). Some of this money may have gone into the King of France’s hands to help him in the War against England.

In England, this bred resentment towards the Cathololic Church. A priest at a university (remember those Universities that started in the 12th Century) named John of Wycliffe (people didn’t have last names in the 14th Century so they just had a first name and were associated with the town they were from) who came up with some new ideas that would further decrease the power of the church. At first the English royalty liked these ideas, but when some other people started thinking that maybe these same ideas about limiting the power of the church could also be used to limit the power of royalty the King and others decided they didn’t like this nonsense. Nonetheless some of the ideas of John of Wycliffe would spread.

At the same time, people, including church people in Avignon were very corrupt, and some people didn’t like the idea of a French Pope and a papacy in France. Eventually there would be a Pope in Rome and a Pope in Avignon (period of time is called **the Great Schism**...and for 3 years there was a Pope in France, Rome and another Italian City named Siena.

While people remained Roman Catholic, the influence and prestige of the Pope had declined substantially...and remember since power is a zero sum game, if the Pope loses power than someone else gains power....and who was that...the Kings!!!

**Meanwhile in Spain...**

Over the years from the 12th Century onward, the Islamic population was pushed further and further south by the **reconquista**. By the 15th Century the main Islamic area was limited to southern area known as Grenada.

Spain had six major provinces, the two largest were Aragon and Castille. Both were in the hands of Roman Catholics. Like the provinces in France many of the people in the other provinces spoke a different dialect, had different customs and felt more loyalty to their province than the Central Government or a King (even today there are groups of people in Spain, the Basques are one example, who still want to have their own Nation within Spain and assassinate a number of government officials each year in their quest).

Over the years, the Church in Spain was extremely wary of the previously existing Islamic and Jewish populations. As we previously discussed, Islamic Spain was a very sophisticated and cosmopolitan area;Jews, Christians and Muslims coexisted and Cordoba was the richest city in the western world at the turn of the first millennium. As long as Jews and Christians paid taxes (which Muslims didn’t have to pay) they were free to live and practice their faith.

Roman Catholic Spain felt threatened by the Muslims and Jews and sought to consolidate their power in what is often called the **reconquista**. Muslims and Jews were regularly required to convert or leave. People who converted were called conversos. Many Jews who converted were called maranos (Spanish for pig). Nervous that they didn’t authentically convert, the Spanish church began an **inquisition** to determine if the conversos were actually **heretics**. Often the Jews and Muslims were successful and others who were resentful of their success made allegations (claims) against them. As a result many Jews and Muslims were found guilty and executed. Many others, especially Jews, left the country for France and Northern Europe.

In 1477 a marriage was arranged between Isabella of Aragon and Ferdinand of Castille. These were the two largest provinces and together Isabella and Ferdinand were able to force the other provinces into line. The cannon didn’t hurt either in their battles against the other leaders.

By 1492 Isabella and Ferdinand got rid of the last Islamic area in Spain, called Grenada. The Christian recapturing of all of Spain is sometimes called the "**reconquista**". To completely get rid of anyone who might be a threat to their power, another **inquisition** against conversos began and once again, Jews and Muslims were forced out of Spain.

Arguably, Isabella and Ferdinand never felt that they had control over the areas they conquered. Unlike William of England who put all his own people in power or France which though had vastly different areas, did not have people of different faiths, the Spanish Royalty felt that anyone who looked to a different God or leader was suspect. If everyone is the same then it is easier to keep power.

For Spain one religion worked well.for a while. But 100 years down the road, the loss of all the well educated Muslims and Jews would help foster its decline. Coincidentally 1492 of course was also the year when Isabella financed Columbus’ trip. For a time, the riches in the New World helped finance the Spanish Golden Age which lasted well into the 1500s.

**Lastly in Italy...**

Italy was undergoing a RENAISSANCE. The trade that began with the crusades and helped to develop the fairs and emerging towns in Northern and central Europe (remember the saying, with trade comes ideas) was going to provide many Italian cities with vast amounts of money. Italy was perfectly situated in the middle of the Mediterranean to take advantage of trade routes from the east.

Venice, the most northern city on the Adriatic Sea would provide great access to the middle regions of Europe and would become the first powerful city. Marco Polo was a Venetian and a good example of how trade with the East soon dominated Venice.

Later other cities such as Florence would soon rival it. Unlike France, Italy and Spain, no city in Italy will become powerful enough to take over the other areas. Like Greece 2000 years ago, Italy will become a nation of City-States. Each city will have its own army and its own nobles. Diplomats will shuttle from one city to another to try to ensure alliances to keep an even balance of power.

The wealth and ideas in Italy will give rise to a resurgence of knowledge and a look back to the Romans and Greeks. Islam had held much of the knowledge intact and now the West would take those ideas and develop them further.

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Mr. Balazs WCI Development of Nation-States

Take Home Quiz based off Reading

1.

a. When and what was the name of the battle where William defeated Harold?

b. Why was William’s victory so significant?

2. How did William thereafter consolidate his power in England?

3.

a. What was the Magna Carta?

b. Who proposed it to John?

c. Why did John sign it?

d. Why was the signing of the Magna Carta considered such an important event?

4.

a. Why was the first Parliament created in England?

b. What are the two houses of Parliament?

5. Why was France unable to unity as early as England?

6. State and **Describe** 3 factors in the 14th and 15th Century that helped France unify and form a true nation-state

i.

ii.

iii.

7. Based on the zero-sum game who in France gained power and who in France lost power when France became a nation-state?

8. Describe the steps that led the lords/vassals to look to the King of France for protection in the 15th Century and why the King no longer needed to rely upon the vassals as he did in earlier times.

2nd half

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

9. How can new technologies change the structure of power? (for example how does the creation of the internet either make it more or less difficult for governments to maintain their power over the people?)

10.

a. What events in the 14th Century caused the power of the Pope to decline?

b. What was the “Great Schism”

c. Who gained power when the Pope lost some of his power?

11. Describe Spain in the 11th Century.

12.

a. Where were Isabella and Ferdinand from and why was their marriage so important to the future of Spain?

b. What was the reconquista

13. What was the Inquisition?

14. What problems were created by the inquisition in Spain that later limited its opportunity to be financially successful?

15. In reading about the various government in Italy in the 15th Century, discuss which civilization or society we already studied that seemed similar.